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Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/55/L.33/Rev.1

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/55/24) in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/55/L.33 on the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA).

2. The Advisory Committee notes from the fourth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 6 of draft resolution A/55/L.33/Rev.1 and paragraph 6 of the statement that the peace-building process of MINUGUA would continue until 2003. Accordingly, under the terms of operative paragraph 19 of draft resolution A/55/L.33/Rev.1, the General Assembly would authorize the renewal of the mandate of the Mission from 1 January to 31 December 2001. In this regard, the Advisory Committee recalls that the mandate of the Mission was to have been completed on 31 December 2000.

3. As can be seen from paragraph 7 of the Secretary-General's statement, the achievements already registered in the implementation of the peace process resulting in substantial reductions in individual complaints form the basis for the restructuring of MINUGUA. Regional offices and sub-offices will be deployed without sacrificing geographical coverage to ensure the continuing presence of MINUGUA. Two regional offices will be converted into sub-offices, two sub-offices in another region will become mobile offices, and one sub-office will be closed. The Advisory Committee notes that this scaling down involves an overall decrease of 45 per cent

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in the Mission staff. Other requirements have also been scaled down and the results of this are summarized in annex I to the statement.

4. In his statement, the Secretary-General estimates the requirements for the extension of MINUGUA at $16,235,400 for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2001.

5. The Advisory Committee notes that there is no provision for the liquidation of the Mission. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that, in the event of the liquidation of MINUGUA, cost estimates will be provided in 2002.

6. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that substantive elements had been incorporated into all verification areas of the Mission with a view to providing broader coverage and support to the rights of the indigenous peoples and women in Guatemala. The Indigenous Affairs and Women Issues Unit will coordinate and ensure the coherence of the now dispersed substantive functions and maintain contact with national and international actors which promote recognition of indigenous rights.

7. Provision is made in paragraphs 1 and 2 of section C of annex I to the statement for 4 military liaison officers and 10 civilian police observers. Upon enquiry as to their functions, the Advisory Committee was informed that while the military liaison officers would help the Guatemala military to develop a new military doctrine and advise on military education, the civilian police observers would work with Guatemalan civilian police on issues of public security and verification of human rights violations.

8. With regard to consultants, the Advisory Committee notes from the statement that the estimates for this item have been increased. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the increase was to help to offset the reduction in staff resources and therefore to provide flexibility to the Mission in implementing its mandate.

9. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 12 of the statement that the scaling down of the activities of the Mission would involve the transfer of excess equipment. For instance, the Committee was informed that 100 vehicles would be transferred to Brindisi. The Committee notes that no provision has been made for the shipment of excess equipment and that approval for the necessary resources will be sought from the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session in the context of the second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

10. In connection with operational requirements, the Advisory Committee notes from the statement that the estimates under this item have been reduced from an apportionment of $5,414,300 for 2000 to $2,297,600.

11. The Advisory Committee notes from section A of annex II to the statement that the estimated requirements for rental of premises at headquarters for 2001 is almost the same as for 2000. The Committee was informed that this was because the restructuring of regional offices has led to the consolidation of functions at headquarters.

12. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution 54/250 A of 23 December 1999, approved a provision of $90,387,200 for special political missions under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

13. The Advisory Committee also recalls that the General Assembly, in its decision 54/477 B of 15 June 2000, noted that the utilization of the provision for special political missions amounted to $66,074,600 and that an unallocated balance of $24,312,600 remained against the provision of $90,387,200 for special political missions.

14. As indicated in paragraph 15 of the statement, charges totalling $17,069,400 relating to actions taken by the Security Council regarding good offices, preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peace-building missions have been reported in the first performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/55/645). Should those charges be approved by the General Assembly, the residual uncommitted balance of the original $90,387,200 provision for special political missions would amount to $7,243,200.

15. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/55/L.33/Rev.1, additional requirements of $16,235,400 would arise for 2001. Of that amount, $7,243,200 would be charged against the existing provision for special political missions, and an additional appropriation of $8,992,200 for the balance of the requirements would be required under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.